EVOLUTION — THE MODERN SUPERSTITION

by

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EVOLUTION PROTEST MOVEMENT

1947

THE extent to which evolutionary postulates have coloured the thinking of modern man does not seem to be generally realised by the Christian Church. They affect all his thought and inquiry, and are the underlying assumptions in his approach to the many social problems that threaten the stability of his civilisation. It occurs to few to challenge the hypothesis of evolution. It is supposed to be so firmly established as a scientific fact that it is regarded as an impertinence to ask for the evidence. It is like a court in which only the voice of the prosecuting counsel is heard. Indeed, it is bluntly and arrogantly asserted to be a fact of such a nature that evidence is a superfluity. Professor Bateson, after an astonishing confession of bankruptcy in the elucidation of the problem of evolution, and admitting that no origin of species is ever witnessed and suggesting that silence is the safer course, because of ignorance of common facts, then plunges: " Let us proclaim in precise and unmistakable language that our faith in evolution is unshaken."

This assertion of evolutionary dogmatism, and quasi-scientific infallibility, is made to mask the real insufficiencies and weaknesses of the hypothesis. The fact is there are none of those transitional forms of life which should exist in great abundance if man is the apex of a chain of events from a microscopic germinal protoplasm. The persistence of species is a patent fact that nature is demonstrating every day; it is a ghost which haunts the evolutionary dreams of scientists, and troubles all their researches. Species do not pass by insensible gradations from lower to higher forms, nor have they ever done so except in theory. Neither in the laboratory of nature, nor in the experimental laboratory of science, is it possible to produce a genuine example of a form which can indubitably be classed as a missing link in the evolutionary chain.

Dr. Julian Huxley, to take a distinguished living scientist, has expounded the view that both mammalian and non-mammalian species in many instances have cut themselves off from further biological progression by specialisations—have, so to speak, embarked upon a line of evolution that has got them into a *cul de sac*, and that man alone of all animal life holds the key to further evolutionary development. " It is a biological impossibility," he says, " for any other line of life to progress into a new dominant type—not the ant, nor the rat, nor the dog, nor the ape."

But what does this mean?

It is a plausible and rhetorical attempt to escape from the inescapable —from the fact that evolution has ceased to operate, that the supposed laws of organic development no longer function.

It conceals the disturbing discovery that there are no evidences of evolution in nature, and a specious theory of biological " blind alleys " has been invented to dodge that painful revelation. What Huxley is explaining is the attitude of the modern scientist who cannot produce the transitional types to back up his transformist hypothesis, and falls back upon authoritarianism as a horn of the dilemma which apparently his school finds more comfortable than the alternative of admitting defects in the theory. The assumption of Huxley is not science; it is propaganda. It is not evidential, it is blind dogmatism, as the remainder of his article, from which I have quoted, proves. (*Hibbert Journal*, April, 1943.)

If it can be said that the rat, the ant, dog, etc., are " blind alleys," terminations of biological specialisations, why not the reptile? What then becomes of the frequently adduced argument that the bird evolved from the reptile? What is the evidence or process of reasoning by which it is determined what are blind alleys, and what are transitional forms?

His further formal, categorical assurance, that biological progress, " like specialisation and adaptation," can be adequately accounted for by natural selection, is as baseless a claim as any made on behalf of evolution. Natural selection, as a progressive and creative agency, has been riddled by Huxley's own *confrères*. It does no more than eliminate the unfit; it is a grandiloquent phrase for a failure in adaptation, but has nothing whatever to do with the production of species and genera.

As Prof. Louis T. More has said, in discussing a number of difficulties encountered in the theory that birds were evolved from reptiles by natural selection, " We might pass over all these points, but the appearance of feathers as an apparatus for flying is as nearly impossible a fact to explain by evolution as can be imagined. By no known theory can a feather be accounted for; unless a scale or a dermal plate can change to a feather in a single jump there is no reason or advantage for the change during the intermediate stages, and a single jump savours too strongly of special design and creation. In addition, the complicated apparatus of bones, muscles, and nerves for flying must have developed during the time the scales or dermal plates were changing to feathers, and while there was no possibility of flight or other use for this complex modification." (*The Dogma of Evolution* (1925) p. 156.)

If Dr. Huxley means biological progress *within* the limits of the species, it may be allowed to stand as a generalisation, but this is not the evolution used by the scientific world for the transmutation of species. Natural selection as a transmuting or transforming agency in nature, has long been abandoned by most distinguished biologists. Darwin's use of a terminology which suggested that Nature was deliberately, if unconsciously, selecting material for heredity to advance the progress of living organisms and to effect their transition into higher forms, seemed to his generation the final word in evolutionary truth, but to-day we look upon natural selection and the inheritance of acquired characters with more than a little dubiety, indeed, with a suspicion that they are rhetorical and literary achievements, rather than that they connote anything of a really scientific character, or that they contribute anything of substantial value to the problem of life and mind.

Professor Jevons, it may be remembered here, was emphatic on the point " That all portions of our science, and especially that beautiful one, the Dissipation of Energy, point unanimously to a beginning, to a state of things incapable of being derived by present laws (of tangible matter and its energy) from any conceivable previous arrangement." (*The Principles of Science* (1877) p. xxv.)

But it is obviously an essential part of the conception of such laws as natural selection, that they must have operated from the beginning to result in the specialisations now existing in the animate world. So you have your choice between Darwinism's unverified hypothesis and knowledge derived from natural history and physical experiments. It suits Huxley's philosophy, rather than his science, to make the astound-

ing assertion of natural selection as the agent in specialisation and adaptation. " Biological progress," he confesses, " does not demand the intervention of a conscious Divine purpose—like most other facts of evolution, it is the automatic result of the blind forces of reproduction, variation, and differential survival."

But at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1921, D. H. Scott, president of the Botany section, said, " The small variations on which Natural Selection relied so much, have proved for the most part to be merely fluctuations and oscillations about a mean and therefore incapable of giving rise to permanent new types." Again he says, " We can see that while the theory of descent and evolution is undisputed (which means persistence in believing it without evidence) we really know nothing certain as to the way in which new forms have arisen from old. During the reign of Darwinism, we commonly assumed that this happened by the continual selection of small variations, and we are no longer in the position to make that assumption." And remarking on the wealth of accumlated facts in respect to fossil botany, he adds that from the point of view of the theory of descent they raise more questions than they solve.

When Huxley does attempt to produce a scientific argument a curiously defective piece of reasoning is advanced which could be blown up by a child, and it is not at all flattering to the dialetical ingenuity of the learned savant. In the Encl. Brit., 14th Ed., he writes, " That because we do not understand the chemical machinery of the development by which a hen arises from an egg, we should not deny that hens develop from eggs. It is the same with evolution." He continues " that there may be some doubts about some points in evolutionary speculation, but not the least doubt about the fact of evolution."

It is true that no one denies that hens develop from eggs (provided that the eggs have been laid by the hens), but the denial of evolution is not a matter of the chemical machinery of development, but of objective evidence at all similar to the evidence that hens arise from hen's eggs. We do know that hens rise from eggs by observation and hatchings in the incubator, but we *do not know* from the observation of natural processes, nor from experimental laboratory hatchings, that higher species arise from lower. It is precisely because we do not see any hatchings of new species in the incubator of the universe, that the fact that hens arise from hen's eggs has nothing whatever to do with evolution. It is a wholly pointless analogy, yet it is by such comical generalisations that it is sought to buttress a dogma which is destitute of any facts similar to that of the hen and the egg. Nature is a very jealous mother, and has effectively concealed any evidence that birds hatch from the eggs of reptiles, which is one of the more ludicrous myths of the conceit of evolution. The evolutionary hypothesis postulates that the egg came first, but Huxley is fortunate in starting with a hen which laid an egg—very much on the lines of special creation. The fruit fly, *Drosophila,* has provided many laboratories with material for the study of heredity, tens of thousands of births have taken place, but despite minor variations of features and adaptations as a result of the experiments, *Drosophila* stubbornly refuses to alter its essential being. If it some day lays an egg which hatches into a hen, we may then think it is time to give some credence to Huxley's conjectures.

This is not an isolated example of Huxley's " scientific " method. Mr. Arnold Lunn sent a critical note to him on his assertion that spontaneous generation of life must have occurred, since it followed from the principles of continuity. " The onus of proof," said Huxley, " lies on the opponents of this view."

Lunn asked why it was " reasonable to suppose " that spontogenesis would be facilitated by a high temperature. Huxley's reply was, *inter alia,* that " the fact that life is apparently not being generated now is no proof that it could not have been then "—that is when the earth was hotter. And to this he added, " You might just as well say that the fact that pterodactyls or matter in the nebular condition do not exist on earth now is proof that they never existed."

I quote Lunn's comment, " It is symptomatic that Professor Huxley should compare the beliefs in pterodactyls which rest on the assured scientific evidence of fossils, with the belief in spontaneous generation, which is based on an ' act of faith.' I am amazed that Professor Huxley considers that the *onus probandi* lies with those who cannot make an act of faith in a phenomenon for which no evidence has yet been produced. Surely the *onus probandi* rests with those who assert that something took place in the past which they admit has never taken place in historic times." (*The Flight from Reason* (1932) pp. xxxviii-ix.)

To this may be added a further comment. If I supposed that human giants, 20 feet high, existed contemporaneously with the Mastodon and the Megalosaurus, on the ground that the conditions produced giant organisms, and threw the onus of disproof on the opponent of this view, one can guess at the scorn with which intelligent men would treat the proposal. It is a strange logic, and one to which most of those who still have some respect for reason and intellectual integrity, are unaccustomed. If creation is not taking place now that is no proof that it never happened, and we are entitled to believe, following the peculiarity of Huxley's dialectic, that it did.

It would appear to the common man, untrained in the subtleties of evolutionary speculation, that the natural law which is not now producing a certain phenomenon never did produce it, unless overwhelming evidence is available to prove that the law operated as conjectured. Huxley's method looks like passing the buck. Two can play at that game. It is true that we cannot fly to the moon, but that is no proof that men did not at one time fly to the moon and the onus of disproving it lies with the unbeliever. It is not my pigeon to prove my assertion, it is for you to *disprove* it. As comic relief, Professor Huxley's faith is not without its value.

Evolution, traced to its source, is a savage, primitive idea dressed up in scientific habilments. It is really primitive totemism, learnedly expounded in terms of biology, genetics, and anthropology. Among uncivilised races, frequently the totem of the clan or tribe was an animal, and it must not be killed or eaten because there existed a definite belief in descent from the totem. Primitive peoples shrank from the killing of certain species of plant and animal on account of a supposed kinship with them.

No one would think of using a few odd fragmentary bones to prove a genetic relationship between man and the anthropoid ape, if it were

not that there is a hypothesis to maintain, and, rather than jettison it, the most fantastic fairy tales are believed which would be scorned by intelligent men were they told by persons without scientific diplomas and degrees.

" It is the lack of logic so common in evolutionary literature, not the theory of evolution itself," says Mr. Lunn, " to which one takes exception. There is a growing tendency to treat missing links, not as defects in an argument, but as strengthening in some mysterious fashion the chain from which they are missing. The missing link is subpoenaed, not only to prove the existence of a continuous chain, but also to demonstrate the imperfections of the geological record."

When it is said, as it is said, that evolution is a natural fact about which there can be absolutely no dispute whatever, then it looks as if dogmatism is not a theological sin only. One cannot help being struck by the liberty of speculation permitted the evolutionist, provided he is a materialist. He can produce a scientific explanation which is quite destitute of scientific proof, and no one may demur. It is this heavy hand of authoritarianism, this arrogant imposition of a fiat, which has been used to keep those down who wished to apply the canons of commonsense to fact and discovery. The final word is uttered. Sinai has spoken, the thunder of god-science rumbles through the earth, and desperate is the standing of him who fails to listen and obey. Anything which does not fit in with evolutionary conjecture is unreal. As a concession, however, one writer now says that the overweening phase when it was almost necessary to ask the permission of physics to call one's soul one's own is past, and it seems legitimate to conclude that religion became possible for scientific men about 1927! So late as that! Yet for scientific men religion actually became possible from the dawn of history, when it was declared: " In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Mankind did not wait for science to give its imprimatur to religious conviction. It was forestalled, and the " conflict " between science and religion we have heard so much about has really been a mistake not by religion but by science.

Professor Eddington says " It is one of those conclusions from which we can see no logical escape (speaking of the idea that God wound up the material universe) only it suffers from the drawback that it is incredible."

Looking briefly at the fiimsy basis and the thin and unconvincing conjectures which are used to support the doctrine of organic evolution, we wonder at the persistence with which men of scientific integrity cling to a theory which natural history displays in extraordinary reluctance to confirm. I think the answer is to be found in philosophy rather than in ethic. The alternative to evolution is Creation, which itself implies, not a natural process, but a supernatural and spiritual realm of Power and Superintendence which is unpalatable to minds reared to seek in a phenomenon its own answer and wonder.

What is becoming increasingly plain is the fact that the doctrine of evolution is extending beyond the scientific mind and profoundly influencing thought in every direction; its most deleterious effects are seen in the realm of individuality and moral relationships. The ethical implications of Christianity, for example, can find no companionship with evolutionary ethics, the former rest on the conception of the

Fatherhood of God and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, but the latter are arbitrary conventions and may be broken at will. This ethic is anti-Christ, since it involves neither duties, nor purposive intention in the universe, nor accountability, nor allegiance, nor conscience, nor any final values whatever. But the Christian faith implies all these things and more. It is probable that the teaching of the evolutionary theory and its permeation of the mass mind, which cannot distinguish between truth and falsehood, and accepts authority in such matters, have done more to leaven the world with hostility to Christian beliefs than anything else. With a certain instinctive logic of his own the average man sees dimly that if life and personality are the fruit of a fortuitous concurrence of elements, then the mind of man is no more important than corns on his feet, his thoughts no more significant than a toothache, and frequently as painful. One might as well speak of a splendid toothache or the integrity of a headache, as display admiration for intellectual and moral cerebrations. Myth making has been a prolific industry in the history of man. The moderns are in as much need as the ancients for some picturesque imaginings to satisfy their aesthetic needs. The plain truth is not enough. Evolutionary theory supplies the deficiency. Phillip Guedala's opinion as to why the English took so readily to Darwin was because it satisfied the national craving for tracing family resemblances. There are many wide gaps in Nature and no evolutionary bridges by which we may cross them. It is in lieu of the bridges of fact that evolutionary science resorts to provisional statement to cloak its ignorance. People have not been intelligently convinced so much as hypnotised into believing it by the dazzling array and galaxy of scientific names produced in its support. Just as history is being re-written, and many of the romantic stories of our childhood are dissolving in the crucible of prosaic fact, so in paleontology a certain hesitation has crept into our assurances, and we can be as agnostic as any free-thinker when it is sought to substitute conjecture for factual evidence.

Evolutionary thinking vitiates all rational thought about life and nature. The presupposition of man as a created being bearing the stamp and image of his Creator, is a foundation on which one can build a rational understanding of the purpose and object of the personal life. To give life meaning and significance is to lay the basis for what is desirable in social and political relationships.

Every natural explanation suffers from the disability that it explains *too much*. In the attempt to substitute for a Christian interpretation of the world, a number of speculations—quasi-scientific, Marxian, evolutionary, psychological, sceptical and nugatory—has been evoked to explain the " superstitution " of the ultra mundane conception which views man and nature as the outcome of a designed and ordered Cosmos.

" If mind," says Aldous Huxley, in *Ends and Means,* " is merely the epiphenomenon of matter, if consciousness is completely determined by physical motions, if the intellect is only a machine for securing food and sexual pleasure, then there is absolutely no reason for supposing that any theory produced by this instrument can have universal validity."

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